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CIA OPERATIONS CENTER

NEWS SERVICE

Item No. 5

Ref. No. _____

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WASHINGTON, June 23; REUTER - PRESIDENT FORD'S NOMINEE TO BE SECOND IN COMMAND OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (CIA) TODAY REFUSED TO RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT ASSASSINATION MIGHT BE CONSIDERED IN FUTURE COVERT INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS.

THE NOMINEE, MR. HENRY KNOCHE, WAS APPEARING AT A CONFIRMATION HEARING HELD BY THE NEW SENATE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE, SET UP IN THE WAKE OF SCANDALS CONCERNING THE CIA, WHICH INCLUDED ASSASSINATION PLOTS AGAINST FOREIGN LEADERS.

SENATOR ROBERT MORGAN (DEMOCRAT NORTH CAROLINA) ASKED MR. KNOCHE IF IT WOULD EVER BE PROPER FOR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO ENGAGE IN ASSASSINATION IN PEACE TIME.

THE 51-YEAR-OLD CIA VETERAN, SAYING HE HAD RESERVATIONS OVER THE WORD "EVER," REPLIED: "I WOULD WANT TO LEAVE SOME CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THE CONTINGENCY MIGHT BE DISCUSSED."

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HE SAID HE COULD CONCEIVE OF CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE THE CIA MIGHT BE ASKED TO CONSIDER SUCH A CONTINGENCY, BUT COULD NOT IMAGINE THE AGENCY RECOMMENDING THE USE OF ASSASSINATION IN PEACE TIME.

AT LEAST 12 OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE'S 15 MEMBERS INDICATED THEY WOULD VOTE IN FAVOR OF MR. KNOCHE'S CONFIRMATION AS THE CIA'S DEPUTY DIRECTOR, IN WHICH POST HE WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CIA'S DAY-TO-DAY OPERATION.

TODAY'S PUBLIC HEARING WAS THE FIRST HELD BY THE NEW COMMITTEE AND FOLLOWED A FIVE HOUR SECRET SESSION AT WHICH MEMBERS WERE BRIEFED BY MR. KNOCHE, WHO HAS SERVED WITH THE AGENCY FOR 23 YEARS.

MR. KNOCHE TOLD THE COMMITTEE THAT IF HE IS CONFIRMED BY THE FULL SENATE, HE INTENDED TO SEEK TO IMPROVE THE CIA'S ANALYTICAL CAPABILITY. AN EXPERT ON CHINA, MR. KNOCHE WAS INVOLVED IN THE U-2 SPY PLANES PROGRAM AND IS AT PRESENT

ASSOCIATE
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Executive Registry

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1 Senator Bayh. Senator Morgan?

2 Senator Morgan. Mr. Chairman, I have just a word or two.

3 I would say, Mr. Knoche, that I have read your resume,
4 I heard you in the executive session, and I believe we worked
5 for the last 15 months or so rather closely, and I find you
6 extremely and uniquely well qualified.

7 I have not reread your testimony from the Church Committee,
8 but my recollection from hearing you during that period of time
9 is that you were candid and forthright with the Committee, and
10 I have no reason to believe otherwise.

11 I have only a couple of questions to ask you. As you know,
12 during the Church Committee hearings there was evidence over
13 a period of time that we had engaged in this country in
14 attempted assassinations, if not assassinations.

15 Do you believe that in peacetime there is ever any occasion
16 for this country or any of its agencies to engage in political
17 assassination?

18 Mr. Knoche. No, sir, I do not.

19 Senator Morgan. Do you believe in peacetime there will
20 ever arise an occasion in which it would be proper and expedient
21 for any agency of our government to engage in any kind of
22 assassination, whether political or otherwise?

23 Mr. Knoche. The use of your word "ever" is a very big
24 one. I don't want to appear to be debating with you on that.
25 I just want -- I want to be just as forthright answering you

1 on that question. I would want to leave some room, I would
2 think, of conceiving of some circumstances under which at least
3 the contingency might be discussed, but it is only the use of
4 the word "ever" that gives me a problem in answering the question.

5 Senator Morgan. You say the contingency may be discussed
6 or might be discussed.

7 What might that be?

8 Mr. Knoche. Let me try to answer the question this way,
9 and I am going to talk from the heart here, not as a bureaucratic
10 official. I can conceive of circumstances where we might be
11 asked to consider that. I can conceive of no circumstances
12 under which I would want to recommend assassination as a solution
13 to any particular problem in peacetime, but I think I am having
14 the trouble with the concept of never considering.

15 Senator Morgan. Maybe the possibility of considering it
16 might not be eliminated, but let me say I realize it is a
17 difficult question, and at times you may have to take into
18 consideration the consequences of the failure to consider, but
19 I would say, I think I express the sentiments of the American
20 people, most of the American people when I say that I don't
21 believe that we should ever engage in assassination of any kind
22 during peacetime..

23 I heard your discussion with regard to covert activity,
24 and it is a difficult area.